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Three Poems

Geoffrey Nutter

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THREE POEMS

Geoffrey Nutter

RIVER RUNNING BY A GLASSWORKS

The poet falls asleep. In this
he is doing his work. The cormorant
dips her head in the water, then
goes under the water completely.
It was all right to be wrong
if among the least embroidery of dew
that chilled the leaves of flowers
a piercing negligent reluctance
to its intransigent necessity
was piercing as the raindrops.
(And it is raining on the glassworks.)
The river is the same once, the same
twice, the same thrice, in as many different ways.
In this it is the same river.
It is the same river as the poet
is the same sleeper when he wakes
beside the river, the river
running by the glassworks,
the glassworks blinking in the rain,
the rain the same rain
falling on the cormorant.
They have done their work, for the moment,
and they can rest now.

METAMORPHOSIS

As the moths branch their velvets

and their silks, so the machinists
 departing at the end of day
 beneath the newly repointed brickwork,
 the lathe men and the boilermakers,
 the apprentices whose houses lie
 beyond the cliffs, and the dusk,
 supercharged with fire, gold,
 rectitude, somnambulance, and metal
 seems to suggest that it is our home,
 and that we are its creatures,
 and that it is the time for something
 other than that which we have come to call
 ideas. And though their cosmological
 plumage is rainbow-hued, and distant,
 and though to have lived among them
 even unknowingly, even distant,
 even as their creatures, mortal,
 makes us who and what we are, still
 the big cool drops of fountain water splash
 against the railings, the rain drops
 splash on plums made blue by what
 made night green crystal. The stalks
 of fennel, marjoram, and meadowsweet
 are fragments of our imagination. Cold
 and elemental, the wind resists, unthinking.
 It is the time for metamorphosis.
 It is the time for watching the reflection
 of the setting sun on water.

VALHALLA

Gargantua and Pantagruel, wise
 are the giants, and we men but geraniums
 above whom a boy king reared his head.
 Like the gold leaf and Dutch leaf

on gingerbread, men shine, aspire,
are eaten like children by titans. Men
are tatterdemalions of rag and glass,
are tasseled for love and augury,
sleep near agrarian berms with one eye ever
open, another turned inward
on the dream's rhododendron onslaught.
We men are but children of a larger
growth. I have plucked a mandrake,
an arrowroot, a tome of instinct
with pages wet with summer dew.
You can quaff rainwater through an aperture
formed by intersecting stalks of marjoram.
The sallow, umbrella-colored sky
is whispering to Panurge
veiled references to some wrongdoing,
hammering folkloricly on Comstock's ingots,
like a boilermaker in an engine shop.
Let the Rhine maidens float downstream
like green tea bottles toward the gold
that awaits them at the source of dawn.

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Geoffrey Nutter lives and works in New York City. His books are *A Summer Evening*, *Water's Leave & Other Poems*, and *Christopher Sunset*.

Note: These poems were originally published in *YR:17* (2012) with slight typographical errors. They are reprinted here in their correct form.